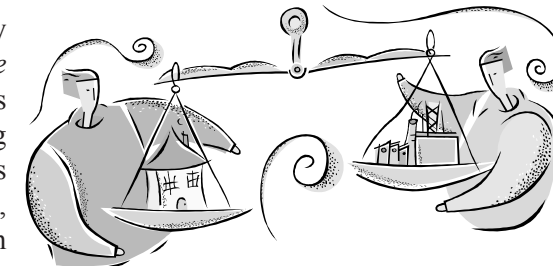


DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE

**Caring, Working, Living, Thriving...**  
World-Class Work/Life Resources at Your Fingertips!  
*Eldercare, Childcare, Parenting, Legal and More...*

First Choice Health EAP is very pleased to announce *immediate access* to state-of-the-art resources for achieving and maintaining balance between responsibilities at work and the demands of home, personal and family life. In addition to preference-guided Work/Life referrals of the highest quality for the families of employers requesting those services, we are excited to be delivering a world-class menu of online Work/Life Resources to *all* of the employees and families we are privileged to serve. This means you and yours!



The range of Work/Life topics available through First Choice Health EAP is extensive. We're certain you'll find yourself using our Web-based tools time and time again (just like we are!). From pregnancy to childhood to adolescence to planning for college or career – all the way through to retirement and quality of life for Senior Citizens, First Choice Health EAP can satisfy your need to know about resources for all phases and all stages of life.

For Work/Life resources at your fingertips, visit [www.1stChoiceEap.com](http://www.1stChoiceEap.com). Once you've arrived simply click on the Work/Life Resources button and follow the instructions for logging in. We invite you to explore all of the user-friendly EAP tools on our site.

First Choice Health EAP – dedicated to meeting your needs and exceeding your expectations for client care and customer service.

Every one of our EAP employee families now has convenient, one-stop access to a treasure-trove of information, resources and tools. Available 24/7, at no cost, and under one convenient umbrella, this online menu of valuable self-serve tools delivers answers, ideas, information and peace of mind in response to questions, concerns and unknowns about ...

*...Eldercare, Parenting, Family, Relationships, Legal Concerns, Financial, Debt & Consumer Matters, Emotional & Physical Wellness, Education and a host of A to Z topics for effective living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

*Eldercare* tools, for example, emphasize rapid access to resources for all the needs of parents or aging loved ones – housing, finances, estate planning, Medicare/Medicaid, insurance, assisted living, in-home aging, advance directives, dementia, mental health, self-care for care givers, etc. See for yourself, you'll find it easy to search by topic, program description, and even by zip code!

If **Childcare** or **Parenting** is on your radar screen, you can explore national or nearby options for pre-school, summer camp, daycare, public or private schooling, at-home childcare, and much more – you can even learn about the childcare regulations in your state and what to look for or ask when interviewing providers.

WELCOME NEW GROUPS

Acupuncture Associates	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Center	B.E. Meyers & Company
Eden Pest Control	Eiland Oil & Gas	Express Credit Union
Family Health Centers	FM Services	Foss Waterway Development Authority
GMI-CMI, LLC	IMCO	Inderbitzin Distributors
Lopez Capital	Media Agents	Mockingbird Society
Pyramid Breweries	Seattle Back Clinic	Sound Air
Stevens County	West Coast Enterprises	

QUALITY, CONVENIENCE, & RELIABILITY

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. If specific health or medical advice or assistance is desired, the services of a licensed healthcare professional should be sought. The information in the First Choice Health EAP Quarterly Newsletter is not meant to replace the advice or expertise of your physician or healthcare provider. If you are experiencing health problems or contemplating lifestyle changes such as diet or exercise, consult your healthcare provider ahead of time to ensure your well being.

The EAP Quarterly Newsletter is published by  
First Choice Health Employee Assistance Program

Bei Lu and Majid Mohadjer, Web Developers - <http://www.1stchoicееap.com>  
Amanda Engel, Desktop Publisher



Bringing Balance to  
Work, Home, and Life

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT  
YOUR EAP...

"I was quickly connected to a provider who is excellent!"  
Olympia, WA

"From start to finish the EAP was extraordinarily helpful."  
Seattle, WA

"I wanted to let you know that between your customer service team and the EAP provider, you saved my family's life. Thank you so very much!"  
Pittsburgh, PA

"EAP helped me with a personal problem that could have been disastrous if not for timely help."  
Tacoma, WA

"Our family found the EAP extremely useful and we're thankful for this service."  
Edmonds, WA

**A Series: Managing the Stress of Modern Living**  
**RESPONDING TO GRIEF & LOSS**

David Burn, MS, NCC, CCMHC, LMHC  
Director, Employee Assistance Programs

No less frequently in the workplace than in private, people who are experiencing loss can be inconsistent, anxious, vulnerable, and out of sorts. The discomfort of grief sometimes pushes people to overcompensate or overextend - using work, for example, as a way of staying one step ahead of fragility, fear, anger or sadness.

Distracting ourselves with business and busyness may be useful in the short-term, but being in perpetual motion offers no permanent refuge from the pain of loss. Grief isn't a competition or an obstacle course to be raced through; neither is it a marathon or endurance test. Grief is a rebuilding process that yields its best results when moved through purposefully at a pace prescribed by nature.

Using the tools of awareness, willingness, respect for privacy, creativity, consistency and patience, effective colleagues, parents, friends and family members build bridges of understanding that support a grieving person's journey through loss and healing. These cooperative efforts make solid footing possible for people of all ages who are sometimes feeling their way through and re-establishing a sense of direction and security.

In the sections below you'll find information and suggestions for responding effectively to grieving family members, friends and co-workers - and even to the pain of loss in your own life. To discuss these ideas in more detail, to consult about changes you may be experiencing, or to request an appointment with one of our providers, please contact the EAP at (800) 777-4114 or online at [www.1stChoiceEap.com](http://www.1stChoiceEap.com).

**“Grief makes one hour ten.”**  
**-Shakespeare**

Grief is expressed in many ways. It has many looks, sounds and faces, and can be very obvious or extremely subtle. Grief is a normal and necessary response to painful setbacks, losses, events, and changes - unexpected as well as expected. The EAP offers this article in support of responding effectively to grief and loss in the workplace, at home, within your network of family and friends, and in your community.

Grieving is a universal human phenomenon that includes several stages: *denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance*. Grieving is a process with a timeframe, chronology and intensity unique to each person. Best thought of as psychological coping mechanisms in response to extreme stress, the process and stages of grieving allow individuals to experience the injury of loss and, ultimately, adjust to the changed landscape and new possibilities for work, relationships, and the future.

Loss of life comes to mind first as an example of experiences that open the door to pain and grieving. Equally important, however, are the effects of more frequently occurring losses - large and small, personal as well as professional. Matters of importance to the heart are diverse and unique to each human being.

**Symptoms of Clinical Depression**

Clinical Depression is not uncommon as a complication of grieving. When lasting two weeks or longer and appearing in clusters, the following symptoms call for consultation with a physician or behavioral healthcare professional:

- Feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope
- Disrupted sleep patterns (too much or too little)
- Lethargy or apathy
- Somatic complaints
- Lack of appetite
- Intense feelings of guilt or hopelessness
- Agitation and irritability
- Difficulty making decisions
- Negative, fatalistic thinking
- Isolating or withdrawing
- Persistent thoughts of death or dying
- Seeing self as a burden to family, friends, and/or colleagues
- Self-medicating with alcohol or drugs

**Recommended Readings:**  
**Books About Grief and Healing**

- On Grief and Grieving -E. Kubler Ross
- When Bad Things Happen to Good People -H. Kushner
- Minding the Body, Mending the Mind -J. Borysenko
- Healing Grief at Work -A. Wolfelt



**Grief and Loss:**  
**Suggestions for Responding**

Uncertainty about what to say or do is very human. Instead of offering advice or words of wisdom, tolerate the awkwardness and acknowledge the person's loss. Willingness, caring presence, kindness and courtesy speak for themselves. The EAP offers these ideas for responding effectively:

- Acknowledge the person's loss
- Acknowledge your discomfort (it's normal)
- You need not have all the answers
- Be willing to listen (be consistent about it)
- Offer assistance with chores and projects that require the person's time and attention
- Donate some PTO to a grieving co-worker if possible
- Respect privacy and confidentiality
- When the pain of loss or change is your own, do for yourself what you encourage others to do
- Respect the person's preferences
- Ask if the person wants to talk about their loss
- Ask what would be helpful
- Recognize the symptoms of depression
- Kids may express feelings behaviorally more consistently than with words
- Allow for inconsistency in the grieving person's work and efforts
- Encourage the use of professional resources
- Contact First Choice Health EAP at (800) 777-4114 or online at [www.1stChoiceEap.com](http://www.1stChoiceEap.com)

**1-800-777-4114**

**[www.1stChoiceEap.com](http://www.1stChoiceEap.com)**

**THE STAGES OF GRIEF**

Not all grieving persons experience each stage of grief. The order of the stages, like the duration and intensity, are unique for each person. It is not uncommon for people to revisit one or more stage or to become stuck in a stage of grief. When grief becomes complicated in that way, consulting with a behavioral healthcare professional or physician is recommended.

**DENIAL:** Denial helps protect against the psychological stress or anxiety associated with unpleasant information or circumstances. When a person is not yet able to accept (integrate) a circumstance or event as real or true, the filter of denial allows them to maintain daily routines. It is a stepping stone to experiencing emotions more directly or intensely.

**ANGER:** As a phase of grief and loss, angry feelings are generally an expression of powerlessness and reflect the intensity of conflicting feelings. Anger creates the illusion of control over anxiety created by an event or circumstance that is unpleasant or unexpected. Anger is a transitional milestone in the grieving process.

**BARGAINING:** The urge to bargain about or "undo" change reflects the grieving person's initial acknowledgment of the significance of what has happened *as well as* the intensity of feelings of powerlessness or anxiety. This coping mechanism can recur throughout the grieving process.

**DEPRESSION:** As opposed to clinical depression (which should be assessed professionally), this stage represents extreme sadness. The despair of grief and loss represents the ability to tolerate the significance of what has happened with less reliance on self-protective coping strategies. It may be the most prolonged stage of the grieving process.

**ACCEPTANCE:** Where awareness, pain and hopefulness combine to spark renewed meaning and energy for the future. The full significance of change or loss has been integrated into the person's life (this is the opposite of denial). Acceptance implies that healing is underway. Healing is a product of time, cleansing through the direct experience of feelings, and embracing the opportunities and challenges of living.